

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 DAMASCUS 3981

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1, 2  
TAGS: PEPR, PINT, LE, SY  
SUBJ: DISCUSSION WITH FONMIN KHADDAM ON LEBANESE DEVELOPMENTS

SUMMARY: INFORMED KHADDAM OF OUR CONTACTS WITH CHRISTIAN LEADERS TO URGE RESTRAINT AND OUR FURTHER DEMARCHES TO ISRAELIS. KHADDAM REMAINS CONVINCED GREAT MAJORITY OF CHRISTIANS OPPOSED CHAMON AND PHALANGE. SYRIA IS EXERCISING RESTRAINT FOR SHORT PERIOD TO ALLOW PRES. SARKIS TO EXERCISE POLITICAL PRESSURE OF CHRISTIAN LEADERS. IT SEEMS CLEAR, HOWEVER, SYRIA IS REINFORCING ADF POSITIONS IN EAST BEIRUT OUT OF BELIEF THAT SOONER OR LATER PROBLEM OF MILITIAS' OPPOSITION TO CENTRAL LEBANESE GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE TO BE HANDLED BY FORCE. AT SAME TIME SYRIA APPEARS NOT TO WANT TO ACT WITHOUT SARKIS AND LEGITIMACY OF LEBANESE STATE BEHIND IT. TOLD KHADDAM WE RECOGNIZED SYRIA RESTRAINT OVER PAST FEW DAYS AND CONTINUED TO BELIEVE IT IMPORTANT TO MAINTAIN CEASEFIRE TO ALLOW FULL OPPORTUNITY FOR NEGOTIATED SOLUTION TO THIS CRISIS. END SUMMARY.

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1. TOOK ADVANTAGE OF JULY 12 MEETING WITH FONMIN KHADDAM ON MIDDLE EAST PEACE TO DISCUSS DEVELOPMENTS IN LEBANON SINCE OUR LAST CONVERSATION JULY 7. TOLD HIM THAT SINCE WE LAST TALKED AMBASSADOR PARKER HAD SPOKEN BY TELEPHONE WITH PIERRE AND BASHIR GEMAYEL AND CAMILLE CHAMOUN TO URGE THEM TO SHOW RESTRAINT IN CURRENT CRISIS AND ACT



RESPONSIBLY. HE HAD FOUND THEM A BIT LESS CONFIDENT THAN SOME REPORTS HAD LED US EXPECT. BASHIR GEMAYEL TOLD US HIS MEN WANTED TO RETURN TO THEIR HOMES BUT COULD NOT BECAUSE OF THE SYRIANS. CHAMOUN, AFTER ACCUSING THE WEST OF HAVING TURNED ITS BACK ON THE CHRISTIANS, WAS FINALLY COAXED TO SAY HIS PEOPLE WOULD NOT FIRE FIRST. WE HAD MADE VERY FIRM DEMARCHES TO THE ISRAELIS REINFORCING OUR PREVIOUS REQUESTS THAT THEY URGE RESTRAINT ON THE PHALANGE AND THE CHAMOUNISTS AND WE BELIEVED THEY WERE DOING SO. WE WERE ALSO TRYING TO BUTTRESS MORALE AND WILL OF PRES. SARKIS TO REMAIN IN OFFICE.

2. WHY, KHADDAM ASKED, COULDN'T BASHIR GEMAYEL WITHDRAW HIS MEN TO THEIR HOMES? HAD THE SYRIANS PREVENTED HIM FROM WITHDRAWING HIS OUTLAWS? IF SYRIA HAD WANTED TO CRUSH THE PHALANGE IT COULD HAVE DONE SO WITHIN HOURS. IT WAS FOOLISH FOR GEMAYELS TO IMAGINE THEY COULD STAND IN FACE OF ADF. EVEN MORE FOOLISH WERE THOSE ADVISING THE PHALANGE TO RESIST. THE ADF, KHADDAM SAID, HAD NO ORDERS TO ADVANCE. IF SUCH ORDERS HAD BEEN GIVEN, IT COULD HAVE CLEARED UP BASHIR GEMAYEL WITHIN HOURS.

3. KHADDAM SAID THAT SOME CIRCLES IN THE UNITED STATES APPEARED STILL UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT THE PHALANGE AND THE CHAMOUNISTS REPRESENTED THE CHRISTIANS OF LEBANON. THIS WAS NOT TRUE. FIGHTING TOOK PLACE IN A PART OF  
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BEIRUT ONLY. HAD OTHER CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES WANTED TO SUPPORT THEM, THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN FIGHTING THROUGHOUT CHRISTIAN LEBANON. EIGHTY PERCENT OF CHRISTIANS, KHADDAM REITERATED, WERE AGAINST THE PHALANGE/CHAMOUNISTS BECAUSE THESE PARTIES WERE TRYING TO IMPOSE THEIR CONTROL BY FORCE AND VIOLENCE FIRST ON OTHER CHRISTIANS AND THEN ON THE MUSLIMS OF LEBANON. CHRISTIANS OF NORTHERN LEBANON, THE BEKAA, THE CHOUF, THE METN AND JEZZINE STOOD AGAINST THESE ARMED BANDS AND THEIR DESIGNS AS DID A MAJORITY OF CHRISTIAN DEPUTIES IN PARLIAMENT.

4. I ENCOURAGED KHADDAM TO PRESENT FURTHER EVIDENCE OF CHRISTIAN ATTITUDES SINCE PHALANGE AND CHAMOUNISTS WERE CLAIMING THEY HAD VIRTUALLY TOTAL CHRISTIAN SUPPORT. WE KNEW THEIR CLAIMS WERE EXAGGERATED BUT THOUGHT NEVERTHELESS THAT THEY MIGHT HAVE MORE SUPPORT THAN HE WAS SUGGESTING. KHADDAM ASSERTED THAT SUPPORT AMONG CHRISTIANS FOR THE PHALANGE/CHAMOUNISTS WAS DECLINING STEADILY. GREEK CATHOLIC PATRIARCH MAXIMOS HAKIM AND GREEK ORTHODOX PATRIARCH ELIAS IV HAD BOTH SPOKEN OUT AGAINST THEM. MANY MARONITE LEADERS, INCLUDING FAUD LAHHUD, DEPUTY OF AL-METN IN THE HEART OF GEMAYEL'S OWN AREA, FATHER



SAMAAN DWEIHI, SULAYMAN FRANGIEH, RENE MUAWWAD, JOSEPH SKAFF, KABALAN AISSA KHOURY, TARIK AL-HABASHI AND TAWFIQ TUHAYNI WERE ALL OPPOSED TO THE PHALANGE AND ITS DESIGNS. FRANGIEH WAS THE FOREMOST MARONITE LEADER IN LEBANON. FORTY PERCENT OF LEBANON'S CHRISTIANS WERE IN THE NORTH AND ALL OPPOSED CHAMOUN AND THE PHALANGE. A FEW INHABITANTS OF ASHRAFIYYAH AND AIN ROUMANEH WERE NOT THE CHRISTIANS OF LEBANON.

5. KHADDAM SAID THAT TWO SYRIAN OFFICERS OF THE ADF UNITS WHICH HAD FOUGHT IN EAST BEIRUT WERE CHRISTIAN AND HAD HAD NO HESITATION ABOUT MOVING AGAINST PHALANGE. HE SAID THAT IF SYRIA HAD WISHED TO ALLOW SOME CHRISTIAN FACTIONS TO OPPOSE THE PHALANGE IN SOME REGIONS (REFERRING  
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TO FRANGIEH, I PRESUME) IT COULD HAVE DONE SO AND THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN MANY TRAGIC INCIDENTS, BUT SYRIA WAS EAGER TO SEE SECURITY AND TRANQUILITY ESTABLISHED THROUGHOUT LEBANON. SARG WAS CERTAIN ONLY A MINOR PART OF THE CHRISTIANS SUPPORTED CHAMOUN AND THE PHALANGE. THE VOICES BEING HEARD ABROAD WERE IN FACT ISRAELI VOICES; THEY WERE NOT THE CHRISTIANS OF LEBANON.

6. KHADDAM SAID FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROUS HAD TOLD SYRIANS DURING HIS VISIT THAT PRESIDENT SARKIS WAS IN A DIFFICULT PSYCHOLOGICAL MOOD. HE WAS CONVINCED THAT THE PHALANGE/CHAMOUNISTS WERE DETERMINED TO ESCALATE THEIR DISRUPTIVE OPERATIONS AND WERE ACTING ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM ISRAEL. BOUTROS HAD REQUESTED SYRIA'S HELP IN EXERCISING SELF RESTRAINT FOR A FEW DAYS IN THE HOPE THAT PRESIDENT SARKIS MIGHT BE ABLE TO EXERCISE POLITICAL PRESSURE ON THE MILITIA LEADERS. PRES. ASSAD HAD ADVISED BOUTROS THAT SARKIS SHOULD THREATEN CHAMOUN AND GEMAYEL WITH HIS RESIGNATION.

7. DURING LAST FEW DAYS, KHADDAM ASSERTED, ADF FORCES HAD BEEN SUBJECT TO DAILY PROVOCATIONS BUT HAD EXERCISED SELF RESTRAINT IN ORDER TO HELP PRES. SARKIS. NATURALLY SUCH TOLERANCE HAD IS LIMITS.

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8. SYRIA ALSO, KHADDAM SAID, HAD TOLD SARKIS IT WANTED HIM TO REMAIN IN OFFICE. HE WAS A SINCERE AND CLEAN MAN. PROBLEM HE FACED AS HE HAD EXPRESSED IT IN LATAKIA AND AS BOUTROS HAD DESCRIBED IN IN DAMASCUS, WAS THAT SINCE DAY HE ASSUMED OFFICE PHALANGE AND CHAMOUNISTS HAD NOT ALLOWED HIM TO EXERCISE HIS AUTHORITY AS PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC. INSTEAD THEY HAD CONSISTENTLY PLACED OBSTACLES IN HIS PATH, PREVENTING RECONSTRUCTION OF THE ARMY, REESTABLISHMENT OF LEBANESE INSTITUTIONS AND REALIZATION OF NATIONAL ACCORD. SARKIS AND SYRIANS BOTH CONSIDERED THAT AIR OF CHAMOUNISTS AND PHALANGE WAS TO "RENDER THE STATE WITHOUT CONTENT" AFTER WHICH THEY THEMSELVES WOULD EXERCISE ACTUAL CONTROL IN SOME REGIONS AND REALIZE PARTITION.

9. ASKED KHADDAM IF KAMAL AS'AD HAD BROUGHT ANY NEW IDEAS YESTERDAY. HE SAID AS'AD HAD ASKED SYRIANS TO CONVINCE PRES. SARKIS TO ASSUME HIS RESONSIBILITY AS HEAD OF STATE OVER ALL LEBANON ANDIMPOSE LAW AND ORDER  
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BY FORCE. AS'AD SAID HE WAS SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF THE PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY. IF SITUATION CONTINUED ON PRESENT COURSE IT WOULD LEAD TO MORE TRAGEDIES AND PARTITION UNLESS CENTRAL AUTHORITY IMPOSED ITS PRESTIGE AND AUTHORITY BY FORCE. TOLD KHADDAM THAT WE RECOGNIZED SYRIAN TROOPS HAVE BEEN SHWING RESTRAING OVER PAST FEW DAYS AND HAVE NOT RESPONED TO PROVOCATIONS. THIS WAS A POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT. WE WERE CONCERNED, HOWEVER, ABOUT MILITARY REINFORCEMENT ON BOTH SIDES, SYRIAN AS WELL AS PHALANGE/



CHAMOUNIST, BECAUSE IT SUGGESTED ANOTHER ROUND OF FIGHTING WAS EXPECTED. WE BELIEVE IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT EVERYTHING BE DONE TO MAINTAIN THE CEASEFIRE AND ALLOW THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT A FULL OPPORTUNITY TO TRY TO FIND A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION TO THIS CRISIS.

10. PRES. SARKIS WILL NOT TAKE DECISIVE DECISIONS, KHADDAM COMPLAINED. ADMITTEDLY HE WAS FACING A DIFFICULT SITUATION BUT EXTRAORDINARY SITUATIONS REQUIRED DIFFICULT AND EXTRAORDINARY DECISIONS.

11. I NOTED IT WOULD BE PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT FOR SARKIS TO ORDER MASSIVE USE OF MILITARY FORCE AGAINST CHRISTIAN POPULATION. KHADDAM REPLIED THAT EARLIER THIS YEAR SARKIS HAD HAD NO TROUBLE ORDERING ADF TO FIRE ON MUSLIMS IN NAYY ES-SABIL, WHICH HAD BEEN SUBJECT TO ARTILLERY BARRAGE LASTING MORE THAN FIVE HOURS. LIKEWISE WHEN SYRIANS FIRST ENTERED LEBANON THEY HAD HAD TO FIGHT AGAINST MUSLIMS AND PALESTINIANS. THEY HAD OCCUPIED LEBANESE TOWNS OF SOFAR, BHAMDOUN AND ALEY BY FORCE AND WITH KNOWLEDGE OF PRES. SARKIS. FURTHERMORE, WHEN PRES. ASSAD HAD AGREED TO OPEN THE WAY TO THE SOUTH FOR LEBANESE ARMED FORCES, HE HAD DONE SO WITH FULL KNOWLEDGE OF THE RISK OF CONFRONTATION  
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WITH THE PALESTINIANS. HAD THE PALESTINIANS OPPOSED THIS OPERATION, KHADDAM SAID, SYRIAN FORCES WOULD HAVE STRUCK THEM DOWN.

12. KHADDAM SAID PROBLEM COULD NOT BE DESCRIBED AS A CHRISTIAN OR MUSLIM PROBLEM. QUESTION WAS RATHER WHETHER WE DESIRED PEACE AND SECURITY IN LEBANON OR NOT. IF PEACE AND SECURITY ARE DESIRABLE THEY MUST BE IMPOSED ON ALL THOSE WHO INSIST ON OPPOSING THE STATE REGARDLESS OF THEIR RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION. SYRIA HAD TOLD SARKIS IT WAS READY TO COLLECT ARMS FROM ALL THE MILITIAS, CHRISTIAN, MUSLIM AND PALESTINIAN. ASSAD HAD SAID TO SARKIS HE SHOULD TAKE THE DECISIONS HE DEEMED NECESSARY TO IMPOSE SECURITY AND THE ADF WOULD IMPLEMENT THEM THROUGHOUT LEBANESE TERRITORY. PRES. SARKIS MUST WORK TOWARDS BUILDING A BALANCED NATIONAL ARMY, KHADDAM CONTINUED. IT WAS RIDICULOUS THAT SARKIS HAD TRIED TO TAKE CARE OF THE PROBLEM OF MAJOR HADDAD BUT HAD BEEN UNABLE TO DISMISS ONE OFFICER OWING TO PRESSURE FROM CHAMOUN AND PHALANGE. THESE GROUPS HAD PREVENTED SENDING THE LEBANESE ARMY TO THE SOUTH AND PREVENTED THEREBY IMPLEMENTATION OF UNSC RES. 425.



13. IF UNITED STATES DESIRED TRULY TO SUPPORT UNITY OF LEBANON, FORESTALL PARTITION AND ESTABLISH STABILITY AND SECURITY, KHADDAM SAID IN CONCLUSION, IT SHOULD INFORM MILITIA LEADERS THAT THEY COULD NOT EXPECT ANY US SUPPORT OF ANY SORT, POLITICAL, MORAL OR MATERIAL, UNLESS THEY PLACED THEMSELVES FULLY AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE LEGITIMATE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT.

14. COMMENT: BELIEVE KHADDAM WELCOMED THIS FURTHER EXCHANGE OF VIEWS. HE WANTS TO HAVE SYRIA'S POSITION UNDERSTOOD AND KNOWS ITS DIFFICULTIES IN LEBANON WILL INCREASE DRAMATICALLY IF US TURNS AGAINST IT. FROM WAY  
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HE DESCRIBES BEIRUT SITUATION, HOWEVER, WE APPEAR TO BE IN THE EYE OF THE STORM. SYRIA IS WILLING TO GIVE NEGOTIATION A CHANCE BUT DOES NOT REALLY BELIEVE IT WILL WORK. IT IS REINFORCING ADF POSITIONS AROUND EAST BEIRUT OUT OF BELIEF THAT SOONER OR LATER PROBLEM OF CHRISTINA MILITIAS' OPPOSITION TO CENTRAL LEBANESE GOVERNMENT IS GOING TO HAVE TO BE HANDLED BY FORCE. AT SOME TIME KHADDAM SEEMED TO PLACE CONSIDERABLE STORE ON HAVING SARKIS AND LEGITIMACY OF LEBANESE STATE BEHIND ADF ACTIONS.  
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